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AUTHOR	Sharpes, Donald K.
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ABSTRACT

Based on a 2-week tour of Russia, this report describes some principal policies and practices of Soviet teacher education. After a brief introduction, the report presents new trends in education and the organization of teacher education as exemplified by the Hertzen Institute in Leningrad. In a description of teacher preparation programs, requirements for acceptance are given along with a typical course of study. A review of Advanced Studies Centers shows how teacher training activities are shared by a coalition of interests. The adoption of educational research into the Russian school systems is also explained. Following a conclusion and 15 references, the report contains a 12-page narrative appendix entitled "Personal Impressions and Impressions of Kindergartens, Schools, Specialized Secondary Schools, and Pioneer Palaces." (BRB)

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IMPRESSIONS OF SOVIET TEACHER EDUCATION

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Donald K. Sharpes
U.S. Office of Education

January, 1973

Introduction

This is a brief descriptive report on Soviet teacher education, some of its principal policies and practices. It has several serious limitations, the first of which is that its author is not an expert on comparative, international or Soviet education. It is the product of two weeks in Russia on a tour sponsored by Educational Staff Seminar located at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

I thought it would be useful to the teacher education comunity to describe current practices in Soviet Russia that might be informative and applicable in this country.

During the two weeks I visited kindergartens, palaces of the young pioneers, specialized English secondary schools, Kiev State University, Kiev Pedagogical Research Institute, Hertzen Pedagogical Institute in Leningrad, the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, and spoke at length with administrators and teacher educators. It was a unique and rewarding experience, and one that is not easily duplicable.

Just getting in and out of Russia is sometimes a major problem for anyone from the West: the three week delay in getting a visa; the requirement to book all hotel rooms and activities through Intourist, the sole and often inefficient Soviet travel agency; the limitations on the length of stay; the trouble locating the right person to speak to (and his or her clearance to speak to you) in the bewildering web of Soviet bureaucracy; the inexplicable and sometimes frequent cancellation and rearrangment of meetings and schedules. Any of these and other Soviet restrictions control move-

ment and access and make it nearly impossible to conduct a comprehensive investigation of any educational program.

However, if the kinds of activities I describe--considering their incompleteness--are helpful in refining old programs, or generating new ones in American teacher education, their description is amply justified.

American public schools shun deliberate attempts to inject religion or politics into the fabric of the school system.

Soviet schools are markedly different. They are clearly and overtly an instrument of the Communist Party and the Soviet government. Soviet schools are the state's way of preparing Russian children and youth for a Communist view of the world and for the "impending" world revolution.

The political bias is perceptible even to the casual observer. The ideology is recognizable; it is everywhere; it is clearly Marxist-Leninist. Every principal of a school is a Communist Party member, in a country where less than 10 percent of the population are active members. Every teacher knows well the ultimate good of all instruction--the work of "our party and our government."

"Education is one of the component parts of the struggle we are waging," said V.I. Lenin at the First All Union Congress on Education in August, 1918. The educational process he had in mind then is now uniformly the same. It is not universal democracy but universal political indoctrination.

A recent publication upholds the validity of the claim: "Soviet youth is the pride of our country. It is our most precious capital, our future. Its training for life and active participation in the building of communism and its upbringing in labour and for labour is the subject of special concern of the Communist Party and the Soviet state."

This paper will describe the following issues: (1) New Trends, (2) Organization of Teacher Education, (3) Teacher Preparation programs, (4) Advanced Studies Centers or Teacher Centers, and (5) Issues in Research.

New Trends

Since the developments of the 24th Party Congress there has been a new impetus, say Soviet educational leaders, in education that has ignited new plans for curricula, policies, and organization of schools. Two of partiuclar note are the compressing of elementary education from the 4th to the 3rd grade, and the introduction of basic subjects in the 4th rather than the 5th grade.

In effect, primary education has been shortened by one year, and now includes only the first three grades. But also shortened was secondary school from the 11th to the 10th grade. Secondary education is now compulsory. Students thus begin their secondary education at about 10 years of age, and can enter the university at about 16 years of age.

There have been some notable examples of the changes in the organization of schools in recent years. As early as 1965 the Central Committee of the Communist Party passed a degree mandating improvements in the pedagogical and ideological training of teachers.

The Ministry of Education of the U.S.S.R. was formed only in 1966, centralizing control in that coordinating agency.

In the late 1960's schools were used universally as training grounds for future soldiers. The Supreme Soviet passed a law of military conscription requiring military instruction under army trainers in schools and factories. In 1968 this training was introduced in grades 9 and 10 (ages 14 to 16).

As the importance of research and coordination of programs in the burgeoning bureaucracy became more apparent, a Council of Coordination of Research was established in the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences in 1969.

In fact, as new issues prevailed they were soon incorporated into the schools by legislation. In 1971 for example the Central Committee of the Communist Party took steps to begin a comprehensive campaign for the economic education of adults to take effect in the 1972-73 academic year.

The point in all this is that trends in education originated from the ideology at the top of the political pyramid. What happened in the schools was and is inextricably and ineluctably bound up with the politics of the Communist Party.

The cause of universal literacy is significant in the Soviet educational scheme. According to the latest (1970) statistical report, there was a 62 percent increase in the number of persons who had a secondary or higher education than there was in 1959.

"The working people are thirsting for knowledge...that failures are due to lack of education, and that now it is up to them really to give everyone access to education..." So said Lenin in 1918. His realization is coming true.

Organization of Teacher Education

Twin concepts underpin all Soviet education, and therefore teacher education: the use of schools and higher education facilities as a form of ideological control, and the centralization of all educational systems under state domination.

Educating teachers is thus likewise controlled by the central government. There are several links to this centralized control. There are two ministries with complementary responsibilities: The Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Specialized and Higher Education. (Specialized secondary schools are those in which students learn all subjects in a foreign language).

The Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the U.S.S.R. is the research arm of both ministries and coordinates the work of teacher education and research.

In addition, each republic (there are fifteen) has a pedagogical institute or teacher training college. These are the largest group of higher education institutions in the U.S.S.R. In larger republics, such as the Ukraine, other institutions also prepare and train different kinds of educational specialists. Some include:

1. The system of state universities
2. Pedagogical research institutes
3. Advanced Studies centers or teacher centers

Technically, the Ministry of Education in each republic exercises control over the preparation and training of teachers. In practice, however, the Ministry of Specialized and Higher Education carries out supervisory responsibilities. The central ministry has total autonomy over science, research, methodology, and teaching. Thus, programs of study are prescribed, although there are some modifications within republics. Ukrainian, for example, is permitted as a language rather than Russian in that republic.

The position of the teacher, according to all Soviet educational leaders, is preeminent and indispensable. A prospective teacher would normally attend a pedagogical institute (about 80 percent of all teachers have), as they exist solely for the training of secondary school teachers. She would normally attend the institute for five years, and would specialize in either the physical sciences, mathematics, foreign languages, linguistics, aesthetics, or perhaps defectology--special education.

The Hertzen Pedagogical Institute in Leningrad is a good example. It was the first socialist pedagogical institute of higher learning. The decree establishing it was signed by Lenin, Maxim Gorky and Lunacharsky, later first Soviet Commissar of Education. It is like its counterparts in other Soviet republics the equivalent of a prospective teacher training institution for both the secondary school and the university. It is also through its advanced studies center or teacher centers the major re-trainer of experienced teachers.

At Hertzen 800 teaching faulty and 420 assistant doctors (called "candidates" but equivalent to the doctorate) help prepare a student body of approximately 13,000 for the schools, institutes and universities of Leningrad and the northern regions of the U.S.SR.

Graduates of a pedagogical institute like Hertzen receive a diploma in their specialty, not a B.A., which also certifies them to teach. There is no separate degree and certification process. Prior to graduation a prospective teacher must write a thesis in her specialty. After graduation she may enter a special three-year postgraduate training program. One year of this is required to pass the examination, and two years to write a dissertation. These graduates of postgrduate programs, "candidates", then have the right to teach at the university or one of the institutes.

Finally, all teacher education acitivities are also a part of the state's economic planning. Known as Gosplan it is the governmental planning organization that regulates the economy, and is similar to our Office of Management and Budget, Federal Reserve Board, and Council of Economic Advisors all in one. It has a hand in regulating many educational policies, their implementation, and most important, how much money they will receive.

Teacher Preparation Programs

Pedagogical institutes exist only to train secondary teachers, and enroll roughly 25 percent of the higher education population. Nearly 80 percent of those enrolled are women, the men preferring to enter technical institutes.

Applicants who have had two years of experience in work production or agriculture are given preference for admission as candidates in pedagogical institutes. 80 percent of the applicant first year slots are set aside for such candidates. Thus, the majority of teachers have had work experience in farms or factories before they begin their formal preparation program. Military service, now compulsory in secondary schools, also counts as work experience.

Entrance exams last ten days. They are both oral and written, and take place before university committees and the faculty the applicant chooses to specialize with. Exams test a prospective student's knowledge of Russian language and literature, her foreign language, and general knowledge.

What would a typical course of study include? The organization of faculties at Hertzen looks like this:

Philology
Pedagogy
Biology and Chemistry
Geography
Mathematics and Technical Drafting
Physical Education
Aesthetic Education
Defectology

The faculties are composed of "chairs," each of which is headed by a full professor or dean.

Take math, for example, from among the 36 specialties at Hertzen. There are three chairs in math--mathematical analysis, algebra and geometry, and elementary mathematics and methods of teaching mathematics. The five year course of study in math would therefore include elementary math, methods of math, algebra, geometry, math analysis, calculus, etc.

The "foundations" or social science component would also include pedagogy, some psychology, and political discipline and scientific communism. Required subjects in this area would be: History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Political Economy, and Historical and Dialectical Materialism.

In general, the curriculum for teacher education is not premised on the liberal arts. The assumption is that students have already received such preparation in secondary school.

Every secondary graduate will have studied a foreign language for six years. In spite of that, a prospective teacher will be required to study that language or a new one for another two years.

Prospective teachers enter their internship in the third year of their five year program. They teach for six weeks under supervision. The also work with the Young Pioneers, the organization which coordinates all extracurricular activities for children aged 9 to 14. In their fourth year they teach in demonstration or cooperating schools from 8 to 10 weeks. Thus, by the time they begin their teaching careers they will have taught for six months.

During internship they learn to work with the "leading" teacher. The "leading" teacher is responsible for moral and cultural upbringing of the children in that grade. Her role and responsibility, however, extend to the children and not the grade itself. Thus, the "leading" teacher continues her responsibility to an entire grade as it advances and thus continues with the children for several years.

Unique to Soviet higher education is the system of supporting students with stipends. About 80 percent of regular daytime students receive full stipends to finance their education. These are in effect state scholarships provided so that students can devote full time to their studies without the necessity of working part time on a job. Thus the state considers study as a full time activity, and satisfactory performance is expected. A candidate for a diploma who fails to measure up to minimum standards will lose her stipend and may be eliminated from the program.

Prospective teachers who receive high marks are eligible for honor stipends which pay as much as 25 percent more. The unique system of incentive pay for students in higher education extends to superior students, and also to students in special subjects such as defectology. Students participating in the work of the mentally retarded may receive as much as 50 percent more than the average stipend. The differential in stipend is not the same everywhere, but differs according to the emphasis the state wishes

to encourage or discourage the pursuit of certain subjects.

A graduate of a pedagogical institute can express his or her wishes about a preferred teaching position. But academic success and the particular needs of schools are larger factors in determining where a teacher is assigned. Generally, married couples are sent where the husband's job is.

A teacher accepts an assignment for three years. Since there are no placement bureaus or employment agencies, those who wish to transfer elsewhere must use their own resources.

But all graduates are guaranteed a teaching position. Usually the number of students enrolled in a program is determined by the number of future teachers schools need. Manpower teacher demand is evenly matched with manpoer teacher demand. Stipend incentives is one way of controlling enrollment. Biology and geography teachers, for instance, were not especially needed in the early 1970's, so that enrollment was discouraged. As expected, attendance was proportionately down.

Teaching positions become known several months in advance of graduation, and although the place and nature of course of study figure prominently, the needs of the schools is the ultimate deciding factor.

Prospective teachers, or those who wish to upgrade their educational qualifications, can also receive instruction in university programs for teacher training, or in evening or correspondence courses offerred through the university or institute.

The curriculum for teacher education at universities is mostly identical to that of the sister pedagogical institute, though the accent is heavier on subject matter. There are no chairs of methodology or pedagogy in the universities.

Correspondence and evening courses, for both universities and institutes,are extremely popular. Over 40 percent of the higher education population is enrolled in teacher training in such courses. The reasons for the popularity are several. First, the quota system for full time day students does not apply to evening and correspondence students. Second, whereas the maximum age for full time day students is 35, no such limitation exists for correspondnece or evening students. Last, because elementary teachers, grades 1 to 3, need only two years of training, and consequently receive less pay, they are usually more anxious to continue their education and advance in teaching status and remuneration.

In summary, a typical experienced teacher is a woman teaching in a secondary school in a specialized subject. She probably attended a pedagogical institute for five years on a government stipend, has had eight years of a foreign language and assorted courses in political and communist ideology, and has accepted an assignment in the school in which she now teaches.

But now that she's qualified, how does she contin ue to upgrade her skills and knowledge? Russia's answer is a network of advanced studies center or teacher centers.

Teacher Centers

The concept of a teacher center, of teacher training activitites shared by a coalition of interests, is not new to England or Russia. Administering a consortia of programs and courses of study has no particular institutional preference. It is a question of orchestrating different institutions to perform a unified service.

Advanced Studies Centers are such teacher centers in Russia. They are physically distinct from pedagogical institutes, though are staffed largely from the institutes. Teachers must return for re-training once every five years. Most return in their fourth year, or from the last time they received additional training. There is great flexibility in the choice about attendance.

A teacher may elect to take part of her training one day a week throughout the acadmeic year, in evening or correspondence courses, or full time until she satisfies requirements. She receives additional courses, besides the extra courses in her subject specialty, in new methods in how to teach that subject, as well as advanced techniques in psychology and other prominent sciences.

In Leningrad, Hertzen sponsors two separate teacher centers, one for city and one for rural teachers. The advantages of a distinct rural center lie in the socialist system for teachers. All teachers are paid the same wages according to what they teach and their seniority. Rural teachers obviously fare better where goods and the cost of living in general is less expensive. Rural teachers

also receive certain goods free, such as coal, wood or peat to use as fuel during the winter. Since many teachers who come for training come from rural areas, returning to homes and families is not an unusual hardship. The Soviet solution of uniform salary schedules and the provision of utility services helps alleviate a potential teacher shortage.

Teachers who attend teacher centers, the hub of inservice training, are paid to attend. They receive a stipend for re-training just as they do for institute training.

Full time, part time, evening, correspondence--none of the convenient methods for re-training offer any differences in substance. The academic content remains the same throughout.

Centers share the bureaucratic framework of the institutes or universities. A typical center in Leningrad had 8 faculties, 14 chairs, and 6 special departments staffed with about 150 instructors. mostly from the local pedagogical institute.

A center will also sponsor, in addition to its academic and summer programs, special seminars, workshops and conferences on both theoretical and practical issues in education. The experience of teachers sharing in dialogue on new trends, theories, curriculum developments and research is apparently having a tremendous impact on Soviet educational practice. The teacher center, whose main objective is the improvement of subject competence and teaching skills, unifies the professional life of the teacher and consolidates re-training programs.

One problem organized by a teacher center exemplifies the kind of service the center can provice. The problem was this, How develop a program of work experience for technical and industrial trades for students in regular schools, and not attending technical institutes? It was determined that students not enrolled in polytechnic schools needed upgrading. The program eventually developed was coordinated through the center. It was accomplished by an ad hoc technical council, a local economic council, a local trade union, the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, and teachers participating in the teacher center. It typifies the kind of activities teacher centers can perform and coordinate in this country.

Issues in Research

How do research results in education ever get adopted into schools and practice? One way in Russia is through teacher training. The Institute of Pedagogical Sciences in Kiev, for example, trains specialists in research. It has 26 departments and 4 research institutes or centers. It conducts research in all phases of education, preschool through postgraduate. Its spokemen say it is free to conduct any kind of research acitivity it thinks essential and feasible.

Hertzen Pedagogical Institute in Leningrad also trains researchers. Most of the graduates in pedagogical research are employed by the research institutes themselves.

Soviet educational leaders report that it is impossible to train a researcher on school problems who is not somehow associated with the day-to-day activities of the school. When some of our group questioned them about detachment and objectivity, they were adamant in maintaining that researchers on school problems had even to work part time in the schools to understand fully the problems they were investigating.

The normal program of study for a potential resercher is first graduation from a postgraduate course of studies, usually three years, then residency at an institute or university. He will then study for two more years for a doctorate.

The Academy of Pedagogical Sciences in Moscow often exchanges personnel with other pedagogical and research institutes. A special center in the Academy coordinates the work of all research institutes.

Institutes usually have three to five demonstration schools, as well as a network of cooperating schools, affilitated with its activities. The schools are used for the practice teaching of the interns and the testing of research activities.

Suppose a new curriclum text was being considered for adoption. Teachers at the demonstration schools would be invited to use a rough draft, and be instructed in its use. They would attend seminars and workshops at teacher centers explicitly for the explanation of the new content and techniques of the text. They would learn the research that led to the development of the text, and how to carry out research on whether or not the text itself is an improvement in student achievement.

If the results of the text's experiment are successful, then it would be introduced into an administrative region of about 1500 students. If successful again, the new text would be adopted throughout a republic.

Certain texts do not undergo experimentation in this fashion, and are consistently the same throughout the U.S.S.R. These are texts used in the senior years of secondary school, and are mostly in physics, mathematics, and the history of the U.S.S.R.

Every republic has its own pedagogical research institute or its equivalent. Advanced courses for experienced teachers are carried out under their auspices. The experienced teacher first learns of new methods and developments in research, then returns to his administrative region and teaches other teachers.

The magnitude of Soviet educational research is impressive. Many of those trained in university pedagogical programs become translators for technical and scientific journals . The results of the work of the highly trained staffs of pedagogical institutes influence in large measure what happens in the schools.

As one might expect, however, the coordination necessary to achieve full impementation is often hampered by the very bureaucracy created to solve it. Since there are obvious limitations to centralized control, the problems of localities, regions, and republics are that they cannot begin to make changes research dictates in all instances to meet their particular needs.

Conclusion

The philosophy dominating Soviet teacher education policy is the same governing all schools. That philosophy is an amalgam of Marxist theory, the traditions and customs of the Russian people, and the experiences, beliefs and aspirations of those who control the machinery of the educational establishment. The schools do their job of producing loyal, qualified workers for an industrial society.

In a sense it is vain to compare or even ask which system, Russia'sor America's, is better. The question is irrelevant unless the criteria for comparison are agreed upon. The criteria, it turns out, are poles apart. One emphasizes the principles of democratic individuality; the other socialist, communist and materialistic communality.

A Soviet student or teacher does not have the choice of what he can teach within a subject. That has already been decided. Academic freedom knows its highly restricted limits.

The evolution of education progress in teacher education especially has thus come about in Russia in a prescribed and predictable manner. In a word, the state determines. No single individual or institution can go its own way. There are no parochial or private educational practices or programs. Programs of teacher education and training, like schools everywhere in Russia, are universally identical. Progress means forward socially, not diversity.

The confrontation of two superpowers vying for a variety of postions of influence in the world, breaking old trade barriers, finding jointly new economic bonds, agreeing on arms limiations, can also hope to consolidate educational alliances. The beauty of a universal free democracy and system of free education for all (Russia's is also free and universal) is that it can experiment with other educational systems within its own.

For a Soviet trained teacher that kind of experimentation would never be possible short of revolution. Experimenting with democracy is not an allowable research hypothesis.

And therein lies the difference.

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APPENDICES

PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS AND IMPRESSIONS OF

KINDERGARTENS

SCHOOLS

SPECIALIZED SECONDARY SCHOOLS

PIONEER PALACES

The rising expectations of entry by air from Helsinki to Moscow begin with an announcement: there will be no photographs. It is a stark statementand a clear reminder that we are entering the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. It is also a reminder that life in Russia is restricted and confined. It is the first of many instances of the suspicion and fear that predominates among a people whose behaviors are controlled.

It contrasts with the visual sight. Willowy clouds, nearly transparent in the slanting rays of the mid-afternoon northern sky, look like a large embroidered quilt. A sudden trough in the clouds causes a darkening shadow. Far in the distance, a giant ice floe. The trailing wisps give the appearance of great altitudes. There is no break in their rumpled regularity.

The descent at night in in unpenetratable darkness. Soldiers are gathered at the ramp. They scrutinize each passenger, especially faces. Customs officals are slow, yet somehow methodical. Everyone is unsmiling. It seems to be characteristic. Soldiers stand under each plane.

Along the avenue named after Gorki, apartments are lit, though strangely. The curtains are not drawn, though the lights within are on dimly. Shades remain open. It is paradoxical that in a country where each of us had experienced some fear, apartment dwellers have their windows and lives on full view to the world. Perhaps they do not wish to draw attention to themselves by letting anyone know they have anything to hide.

The permanent impression of the U.S.S.R. is that it is a controlled society. Every aspect of life has its regulations and its censors. Watchful eyes are everywhere. Visitors are ushered into rooms, the hosts arrive and sit, reserved, serious, and composed. After all introductions a man enters and guards the door. Everyone the group goes escorts and attendants stand at ends of each corridor, guard every door, every entrance. It is a chilling experience.

Sessions between our group and hosts and guides is formal. Tables are arranged in a standard rectanular fashion. One begins to understand why the arrangement of tables at international meetings assumes such importance. No one wishes to vary the accustomed procedure.

The confrontation of the group with Russian educators was partly a confrontation with the cultural and ethical formality and reserve of Western Europe, of which Russia is assuredly within the orbit. General overviews and presentations were usually lengthy and usually dull. The fact that everythin had to be translated didn't help. Lights in the room were no always on. One gets the distinct impression that special permission is required for their use.

Their standard dress is conservative, ultra-conservative. Vice-rectors, deans, directors, administrators have, with little variation, a black or charcoal suit, a white shirt, and a subdued tie--narrow and mostly dark blue. This contrasts sharply with the dress of members of the foreign ministry (Communist Party officials) and Intourist guides. Alex, for example, and

Intourist guide in Kiev, is modern, though not fadish. He wears a suade or leather coat, a yellow turtleneck sweater. He has a wrist watch, not a common commodity. His shoes are crepe-soled.

Deputy ministers, department heads, and other administrative officals, once introduced, sit in stony silence while their director speaks in grand rhetoric about the organization and sometimes grandeur of the institution over which he holds jurisdiction.

There is one whose presence prevails universally. The man has become a god (officially his deification was in 1967 by the Central Committee). His portrait adorns every classroom and meeting hall. His bust and profile decorates streetcorners, bookstalls and stores. The influence is not subtle, and is pervasive. If there is anything that characterizes Soviet society it is that Lenin is, and will continue to be.

Kindergartens

Women and mothers often work and their children often attend kindergartens, though they are not mandatory. Some are comlexes arranged to accommodate children from ages one and a half to seven. Others are for children aged three to five. STill others exist for children in weak health or for those with identificable speech defects.

Kindergarten teachrs have attended pedagogical institutes. In Moscow alone there are over 2,500 kindergartens. Parents pay only a small part of the tuition. The range is two rubles and fifty kopeks (roughly $2 to $12 dollars). However, the exact amount depends on the family income and is adjusted accordingly.

Children in kindergartens are divided into age agroups. In an average kindergarten of 260 children, 25 would actually board for the night or weekly.

Each of the rooms we visited was a showcase of structured display. Floors were shiny with new wax, and there were no scuff marks. Toys were orderly, as if no children were permitted in the room. The doors were carefully locked and unlocked behind us.

It would appear that children to not actually belong to their parents anyway. If there is a privileged class, it is the children. Parents do not have the responsibility for their education. The state does.

Schools

We were told that one striking example of Soviet educational innovation was the introduction in 1967 of new programs and curricula. The main emphasis is on reform in secondary education. A high school education is now compulsory. Particular emphais surrounds part time, evening, correspondence and technical schools and courses.

One example is the surge in optional courses, or what we would call electives. New subjects include logic, cinematography, mineralogy, radio techniques, labor studies, psychology, etc.

Thirty-eight percent of school time is spent on "himan" subjects, and thirty-six percent on math and sciences. "Human" subjects are not just the humanities, but also foreign languages. It might be fair to say that about seventy-five percent of a student's time is spent on eithr math, science, foreign languages or some combination.

Textbooks used to be written by metholdologists, but famous Soviet scientists and well-known academicians are now writing texts.

Schools do not generally teach career skills, but elementary school shelp develop manual training. Professional orientation to the world of work is acquired through labor and polytechnic practicums. There is a mimimum requirement for manual skills for all students. A planned economy dictates the need for manpower, and hence a given number of people to fill required job

slots.

Specialized Secondary Schools

A woman is her late forties or early fifties, dressed smartly in a pink knit dress, enters the decorated classroom and sits at the end of the conference table. She is poised and self-assured. She is an active Communist Party member, and the principal of School No. 6, a specialized secondary school. Specialized secondary schools are really languagesschools in which teachers, fluent in a language, teach a regular high school course in that language.

School No. 6 was an English specialized school.

There are over 800 such schools in the U.S.S.R. Students receive instruction from the 4th grade in physics, history, chemistry, and their other subjects while practicing their listening and speaking skills in a foreign language. There are 40 such specialized schools in English, two in Moscow. Students are selected (it is not clear how) from within administrative regions, metropolitan areas, and districts. They receive special texts, have language labs, and special equipment.

An international friendship club flourishes. It was created to put English into actual use through plays, lectures, and the reception of tourists from English-speaking countries.

Graduates of specialized schools are eligible to enter the university, and nearly 90 percent do. By the 8th, 9th and 10th grades students can type in English. So they are employed as part-time typists and thus continue to learn English while earning money. Boys sometimes practice their skills in technical translation.

How teachers are selected to teach in specialized schools is not exactly clear. A spokeman indicated that there were no special tests for qualification. (In general, any reference to testing evoked an ambiguous answer. Since all are equal in the eyes of the socialist government, there are no inequalities, though there apparently are differences in ability).

The vice-principal has the final say in hiring. The principal said that there was an effort to recruit younger teachers with wisdom. Unanswered was the question of the percentage of teacher applicants.

The literature class in School No 6, presided over by Mr. Alexander Isaich, was considered The Moon and Sixpence, by Somerset Maughan. He questioned them about the chapters they were supposed to have read. One young man stands and recites part of the narrative action of the novel. Mr. Isaich requests that the students be seated. He asks that they speak louder.

Mr. Isaich is short, under 5' 3", dressed in a white shirt and thin black tie. He wears a sleeveless sweater. His face is somewhat oblong and somber; his hair thinning from his narrow forehead. His speech is chopped and quick, and he demands perfect accuracy from his docile students.

We were told that there were about 32 students to each class. However, in this English literature class there are only 13.

The class drill goes somethinglike this: "Did Charles break away from his family, or did he try to run away from London society?" Anna, what is your opinion? Anna jumps to her feet. "Charles broke away from the philstinesociety that captivated him," comes the response from the twelve year old. "Speak your mind," says Mr. Isaich. We wonder if automatons have been programed. It seems all questions are directed to the right side of the room. The student responses are memorized to pre-determined questions.

The impression from this brief session in a literature class is that the characters are full of grief and anxiety, that the society Maughan's characters live in is in trouble, and that the authors, and by implication the British people, are debached from the rituals of capitalism.

We go to a history class. The room's lights are turned on in our honor. The class is considering, we are told, the Norman conquest of England. There are eleven students. The teacher for-

cible about the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and Doomesday book, recording the list and worth of everyman's property at the time of the invasion. The emphasis on property is not lost on the audience.

The teacher is no-nonsense. "Put your briefcase down from the table." To a student who quietly asks another a question softly: "I cannot operate under these conditions."

Students do not take notes, but instead have only their textbooks on their desks (two students to a desk), and only take out their notebooks when requested.

Palaces of the Young Pioneers

The Young Pioneers is an organization for youth aged 9 to 14. Its main purpose is to improve young people's studies and habits. It is the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Little League, and YMCA all in one.

There are three major categories.

1. To help the schools by supplementing activities
2. To enroll as many children as possible
3. To perfect manual skills and hobby work

The organization alos publishes the works of young communists. Its actitivites include music and dance and sports events.

Members of different clubs, the International Friendship Club, the Ballet Club, etc., participate in certain functions of the palaces of the pioneers.

For example, the Palace of the Pioneers in Kiev has 120 different hobby groups, and enrolls nearly 9000 pioneers, approximately 90 percent of the city's student population from that age group. Any child can enter a hobby group without any restrictions, we are told. Children attend for an average of 3 years about twice a week. In certain cases, as when a child excels in ballet, may spend as much as 10 years in the palace.

But it is more than a hobby club. Its function is to enhance a child's backgroun and help him or her improve, for example, in physics or mathematics. Those children who do well in math and science study groups are invited to attend the university without taking the entrance exams. Most of these attend the Moscow Physics and Technic Institutes.

The assistant director who tells us about the young pioneers is short and stout and in her late forties. She is dressed properly, though not fashionably, in a bright red frock, knitted, of light weight. She has brown eyes, and lightly-dyed blond hair. She wears lace ruffled at the collar. She wears a wedding band.

Are all the activities of the young pioneers equivalent to elective courses in high school? In principle, yes, but there is also a special subject concentration. For example, biophysics is not a course taught in secondary school, but is offerred with the pioneers.

Each child signs up for a minimum of two hobby groups. He can then attend and learn of pioneer activities from the pioneer club room in his own school. He can go to activities in his region; or, if he lives in a metropolitan area such as Kiev, to the central palace.

Clearly, the pioneer organization is used to indoctrinate impressionable minds. The most highly favored study groups are in Marxism, Leninism, and scientific communism. It is said that all are voluntary, Nearly all children attend however.

Chemistry study groups might consider the reports of the five year plan as enunciated by the 24th Party Congress.

What is the relationship between a child's progress and his success in later schooling? Every head of a hobby or study group is in direct contact with the school. Many teachers are part time in their assignments in the pioneer organization. N t being able to attend the pioneer palace is the ultimate threat to a child.

Hiw do the activities of the pioneers relate to future employment? Information is circulated about which jobs are in demand. Although the work of the pioneers is not related directly to manpower needs, students are "urged" to sign up for certain study or hobby groups.

Instructors in the palaces of the pioneers are not only part time teachers from the schools. Scientists, artists, engineers, ballerinas, and other professionals join in the teaching program.

The Central Palace of the Pioneers in Kiev has about 320 on its main staff, and 200 more supervisors who are part-time.